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G. H. PRINGLE, M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H.  
M E D I C A L   O F F I C E R   O F   H E A L T H .





B O R O U G H   O F   B R I D G W A T E R .

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL  
OFFICER OF HEALTH, FOR 1945.

Health Department,  
Town Hall,  
Bridgwater.

July, 1946

TO:  
THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN & COUNCILLORS OF THE BOROUGH OF BRIDGWATER  
Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my fifth Annual Report  
on the health of the Borough.

The vital statistics show that the birth rate remains high  
compared with rates during the past decade, though it is slightly  
lower than last year's figure; the death rate is almost unchanged;  
and the infant mortality figure of 37.59 is extremely low.

I wish to express my thanks to the Chairman and Members of  
the Health Committee, and to all members of the Council's staff  
for their assistance during the year.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

G.H. PRINGLE.

# STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1945.

Area (acres)	1,893
Population (Registrar General's estimate)	19,620
No. of inhabited houses on 31st Dec. 1945	5,277
Rateable value on 31st Dec. 1945	£127,921
Sum represented by a ld. rate on 31st Dec. 1945	£ 509

## Live Births

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	170	175	345
Illegitimate	<u>28</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>54</u>
	<u>198</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>399</u>

Birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated population 20.33

Still Births ... .. 15  
 Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births 36.23

Death Rate - Total number of deaths ... .. 261  
 Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population .. 13.30

No comparability factor available for 1945. The above uncorrected rate would probably be appreciably lower if corrected for age and sex distribution.

## Puerperal Deaths.

	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Rate per 1,000</u> <u>births</u>
From Puerperal Sepsis	-	-
From other maternal causes	-	-

## Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age)

Legitimate ... ..	12
Illegitimate ... ..	<u>3</u>
	<u>15</u>

Rate for all infants per 1,000 live births 37.59  
 Rate for all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ... .. 34.78  
 Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ... .. 55.55

## Other Deaths

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ... ..	29
" " Measles (all ages) ... ..	-
" " Whooping Cough (all ages) ... ..	-
" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) ... ..	-

Causes of Death during 1945.

Cause of Death	M	F	Total
All causes	133	128	261
1. Typhoid and Paratyphoid fevers	-	-	-
2. Cerebro-spinal Fever	-	-	-
3. Scarlet Fever	-	-	-
4. Whooping Cough	-	-	-
5. Diphtheria	1	-	1
6. Tuberculosis of the respiratory system	5	6	11
7. Other forms of Tuberculosis	5	1	6
8. Syphilitic diseases	-	-	-
9. Influenza	-	-	-
10. Measles	-	-	-
11. Acute Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	-	-	-
12. Acute Infectious Encephalitis	-	-	-
13. Cancer of buccal cavity, oesophagus (m) uterus (f)	2	1	3
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum	2	3	5
15. Cancer of breast	-	4	4
16. Cancer of all other sites	10	7	17
17. Diabetes	2	-	2
18. Intra-cranial vascular lesions	18	24	42
19. Heart Disease	37	38	75
20. Other disease of the circulatory system	3	4	7
21. Bronchitis	7	6	13
22. Pneumonia	3	3	6
23. Other respiratory disease	4	2	6
24. Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	3	-	3
25. Diarrhoea under 2 years	-	-	-
26. Appendicitis	-	-	-
27. Other digestive disease	1	3	4
28. Nephritis	4	3	7
29. Puerperal and post-abortion sepsis	-	-	-
30. Other maternal causes	-	-	-
31. Premature birth	2	-	2
32. Congenital malformation, birth injuries, etc.	5	2	7
33. Suicide	-	-	-
34. Road Traffic Accidents	2	-	2
35. Other violent causes	3	3	6
36. All other causes	14	18	32

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES  
FOR THE AREA

The general arrangements as regards Hospitals, Clinics, Treatment Centres and Ambulance facilities are as described in the Medical Officer's Report for 1944.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable diseases that occurred in the Borough during 1945. The table is drawn up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications owing to corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioners or the Medical Officers at the Isolation Hospitals:-



DiseaseTotal No. of Cases.

Scarlet Fever	35
Diphtheria	7
Whooping Cough	52
Measles	83
Acute Pneumonia	7
Cerebro-spinal fever	2
Acute Poliomyelitis	1
Erysipelas	5
Puerperal Pyrexia	11
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	9
Dysentery	2
	<u>214</u>

The seven cases of diphtheria include three in adults, and four in children under the age of 15. There was one death - a boy of 11, who had not been immunised.

Small-pox Contacts.

During the past few years one or more cases of small-pox have arisen on board a number of homeward bound ships. Contacts of such cases who are allowed to proceed to their destinations are kept under surveillance for a period of 14 days after arrival.

This most important precaution has again necessitated a considerable number of visits to contacts whose homes are in Bridgwater.

Diphtheria Immunisation.

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year:-

Age under 5 years	Age 5 - 15 years	Total
251	163	414

At the end of the year the Ministry of Health required the completion of a form setting out the total number of children at different ages who had been immunised up to December 31st. The following table is taken from this form:-

Number of children who had completed a full course of Immunisation at any time up to 31st December, 1945.								
Age at 31.12.45 i.e. born in year	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5 - 9	10 - 14	Total
	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1936-40	1931-35	Under 15.
Number immunised	-	141	169	200	203	1,140	1,484	3,337
Estimated mid-year population, 1945.	- - - -	- - -	1,860	- - - -	- - -	- - 3,370	- -	5,230

The best method of protection is to give each child two immunising injections at one year of age, and a third reinforcing injection early in school life.

Arrangements have been made in this Borough to invite parents to bring their children for this reinforcing injection at 5 years of age, and during 1945 the number attending for this was 109.

Supplies of diphtheria anti-toxin are available at the Health Department during ordinary office hours, and a small stock is also held at Bridgwater Police Station and is available at any hour.

### Tuberculosis

There were 44 cases of respiratory and 13 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. The figure for respiratory cases is ten less than the previous year.

### Scabies

The following table shows the number of cases treated at the Old Isolation Hospital during the past four years:-

	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>
Male Adults	85	58	34	36
Female Adults	128	71	122	98
Children	<u>398</u>	<u>386</u>	<u>261</u>	<u>302</u>
	<u>611</u>	<u>515</u>	<u>417</u>	<u>436</u>

It will be observed that the incidence is practically the same as in 1944. In last years report I mentioned that I considered it to be unlikely that the area would be as completely free from the contagion as in pre-war years for some considerable time, and these figures again suggest that this will be the case.

### Verrinous Conditions

The Cleansing Station for the treatment of verrinous conditions, which was opened in June 1943, continued to serve a useful purpose. The attendances were as follows:-

	Number of individuals	Attendances
Adults	34	66
Children of school age	334	657
Children under 5 years of age	2	4
Total	370	727

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

### 1. Water

Regular bacteriological examinations have been made of both the raw water and of the water going into supply.

Full details of the supply were given in last years report.

### II. Drainage and Sewerage.

A comprehensive scheme involving the laying of new sewers and the provision of sewage disposal works has been prepared by the Council's Consulting Engineers.

### III. Swimming Baths

As in previous years supervision was maintained over the condition of the water in the swimming baths.

### IV. Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

Details of this work are shown in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR  
FOR 1945

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TO:

The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Bridgwater.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1945. This report is still of necessity very curtailed.

Complaints.

During the year, 138 complaints were received and dealt with under the Public Health or Housing Acts, and in addition there were 44 complaints of rat infestation.

In only 4 cases were Statutory Notices served and in no instance was it necessary to take legal proceedings.

Housing.

169 houses were inspected for the purpose of having housing defects remedied whilst 11 houses were systematically inspected under the Housing Regulations. Demolition Orders were made in respect of these 11 houses. A list of the defects found and remedied is given in the summary at the end of the Report.

Owing to the shortage of labour and materials it is still difficult to secure adequate repairs and in most cases it has become impossible to give a time limit in which repairs must be carried out.

Schedules of houses to be demolished have been drawn up and so far over 350 houses have been listed for demolition as soon as sufficient new houses have been erected.

The investigation of applications for Council houses, where housing defects or serious over-crowding was alleged, has been carried out during the year, and in co-operation with the Medical Officer of Health a priority list of such applications drawn up. This work increased so rapidly that the Town Council wisely decided to appoint a Housing Manager.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding is still increasing and because of war-time conditions it is almost impossible to secure abatement except in the most serious cases. The majority of cases are due to young persons marrying during the war and remaining at home with the result that two or three families are now occupying a house only suited for one family. Three cases have been abated during the year.

Verminous Premises

The number of houses found to be verminous has remained at 22, the same figure as in 1944.

Meat and Foods

Under the Government Scheme, slaughtering is carried out at Weston-Super-Mare, and therefore the only meat inspection is that of pigs for home consumption, casualties and the inspection of meat at the butchers' shops.

A large quantity of other foods has been condemned and in this connection over 250 visits have been paid to grocers and similar shops. The following is a list of food condemned:-

Beef	10 lbs.
Offal	5 lbs.
Wet Fish	5 cwt. 56 lbs.
Canned Fish	217 tins
Canned Meat	461 tins
Canned Fruit	6 tins
Canned Vegetables	36 tins
Canned Soup	71 tins
Canned Milk	622 tins
Fish and Meat Paste	26 jars
Pickles and Sauces	14 jars
Cheese	46 lbs.
Bacon	92 lbs.
Butter	9 lbs.
Sugar	11 lbs.
Jam	88 tins and jars.
Dried Fruit	221½ lbs.
Cereals and Oatmeal	3 cwt. 28 lbs.
Flour	91 lbs.
Rice	40 lbs.
Chocolate	23 lbs.
Crunpets	39 doz.
Biscuits	42 lbs.
Fish Cakes	66 doz.
Eggs	8 doz.
Macaroni	110 lbs.
Other Foods	1 cwt. 34 lbs.

#### Rats and Mice Destruction Act.

The systematic destruction of rats and mice is proceeding fairly satisfactorily. There are two fully trained Rodent Operators on the staff and block control is being carried out. There is a certain amount of apathy on the part of occupiers of premises to report infestations, due, I fear to the system of charging for work done. At the time of writing this report a scheme is being advocated by the Ministry of Food which should overcome this apathy.

#### SUMMARY.

##### Inspections made during the year.

##### General Sanitation.

Water Supply	32
Drainage	125
Common Lodging Houses	2
Houses let in lodgings	-
Factories	37
Public Conveniences	9
Rats and Mice	114
Shops	194
Swimming Baths	36
Miscellaneous	24

## Housing

Houses inspected under Public Health Acts	169
Visits paid to the above houses	422
Houses inspected under Housing Acts	11
Visits paid to the above houses	11
Houses inspected in connection with overcrowding	26
Visits paid to the above houses	28
Verminous premises inspected	22
Visits paid to the above premises	32
Miscellaneous	13

## Infectious Disease

Inquiries in cases of Infectious Disease	41
Visits re disinfection	4

## Meat and Food Inspection

Visits to Slaughterhouses	80
Visits to Shops and Stalls	14
Visits to other premises for meat inspection	15
Visits to Butchers	54
Visits to Fishmongers and Poulterers	15
Visits to Grocers	153
Visits to Greengrocers and Fruiterers	8
Visits to Confectioners	4
Visits to Bakchouses	21
Visits to Fried Fish Shops	8
Visits to Cowsheds	22
Visits to Dairies and Milk Shops	32
Visits to Ice cream Premises	22
Visits to Restaurants.	10
Visits to Food Preparing Premises	19
Visits in connection with Sampling	
Milk Bacteriological	7
Milk Tubercle Bacilli	6
Miscellaneous	32

## Explosives

Visits in connection with explosives	20
Visits in connection with petroleum spirit	-

## Work Done

Complaints Investigated	138
Rat complaints investigated	44
Choked drains and sewers cleared	35
Drains relaid	4
Drains repaired	7
Inspection chambers provided	7
Defective water closets repaired	13
Defective roofs repaired	17
Defective windows repaired	9
Defective eavesgutters and downpipes repaired	14
Defective walls repaired	5
Defective plastering repaired	15
Defective firegrates and ranges repaired	4
Defective coppers repaired	2
Defective doors repaired	4
Defective chimneys repaired	3
Defective flush cisterns repaired or renewed	1
Defective washhouses repaired	2
Defective ceilings repaired	15
Defective staircases repaired	4

Defective floors repaired	4
Dampness remedied	3
Ceilings whitened	11
Rooms distempered or papered	10
Foul accumulations removed	3
Overcrowding abated	3
Vermineous premises cleansed	16
Premises disinfested from rats or mice	44

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

R.K. LEAN,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.